

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,  
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



NATIVITY OF OUR LORD  
DECEMBER 24, 2025

CAROLS 4:00 PM

WORSHIP 4:30 PM

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH  
901 EAST STROOP ROAD  
KETTERING, OHIO 45429-4688  
(937) 298-0136

# INTRODUCTION

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

## GLORY ENOUGH FOR EVERYONE

To maintain the machinery of empire, people must be counted; not to be valued as individuals, but to assess tribute. It is the census. Lists of family members, and decisions about them, must be made. As your life, family, and records are audited, so also is your future decided. What sacrifice will be required for the glory of Rome?

If he has listened to Mary's song (Luke 1:46-55), Joseph, as the state-recognized head of the household, can safely allow himself and his family to be among the counted. He would know that Imperial Rome's time is short, that God brings down the "powerful from their thrones" and "sends the rich away empty." Although in temporary bondage, God's people will receive the promises made to Abraham for the sake of his descendants. If Joseph has listened to Mary (Luke 1:32-33) he knows that this son will sit on David's throne, and cannot be removed. He may not understand how and when these things will come to pass, only that they will. Why not be counted?

Shepherds, however, cannot expect to be counted. While the rest of the world is engaged in the games of empire, they watched their flocks, unnoticed by census-takers. But they were not unnoticed by God. Beyond the view of the watchful eye of Caesar, God was doing a new thing, forging true peace to upset the sham pax of imperial domination, a new kingdom whose only army is that of angels singing, rank upon rank, of God's saving work. It all begins with the unforeseen birth of a child and the wonder of a mother. We, like shepherds, stand in awe at God's gracious surprise. There is glory enough for all.

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*\*\* indicates to stand as you are able.*

# PRELUDE

*Carols and special music before worship*

All are invited to join in singing the carols.

## SOLO

"Comfort ye, my people"  
No. 2 from Messiah  
by Georg Friedrich Händel  
*Don Lutz, tenor*

Comfort ye, my people,  
saith your God.  
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,  
and cry unto her, that her  
warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

The voice of him who crieth in the wilderness:  
Prepare, ye, the way of the Lord;  
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

## CAROL

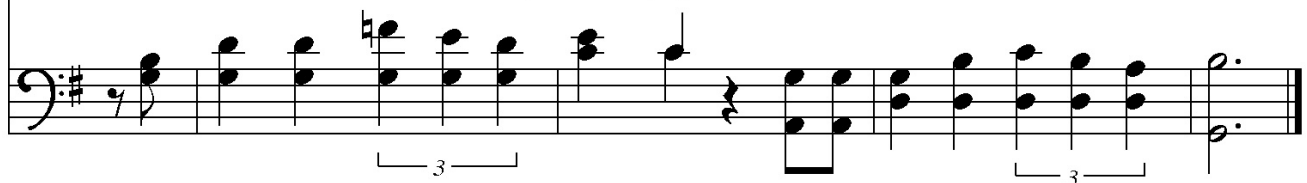
"He Came Down" (ELW 253)



1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;  
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;  
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;  
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;

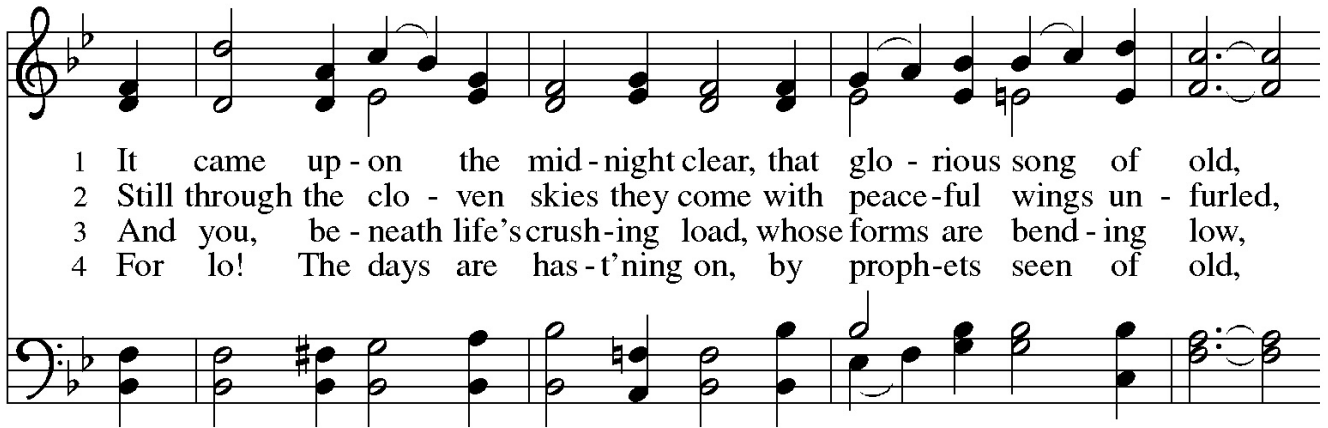


he came down that we may have love;  
he came down that we may have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er - more.  
he came down that we may have peace;  
he came down that we may have joy;

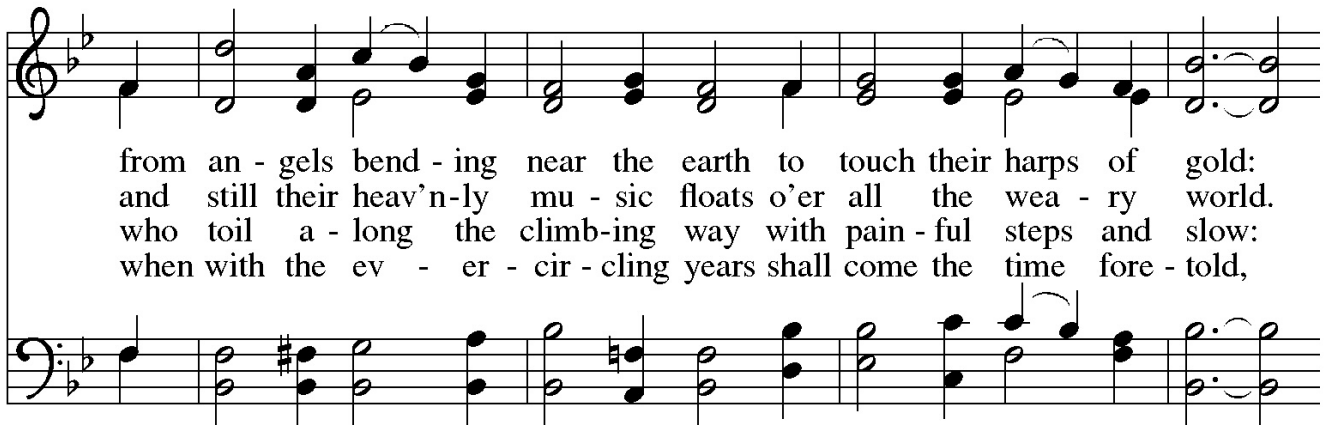


## CAROL

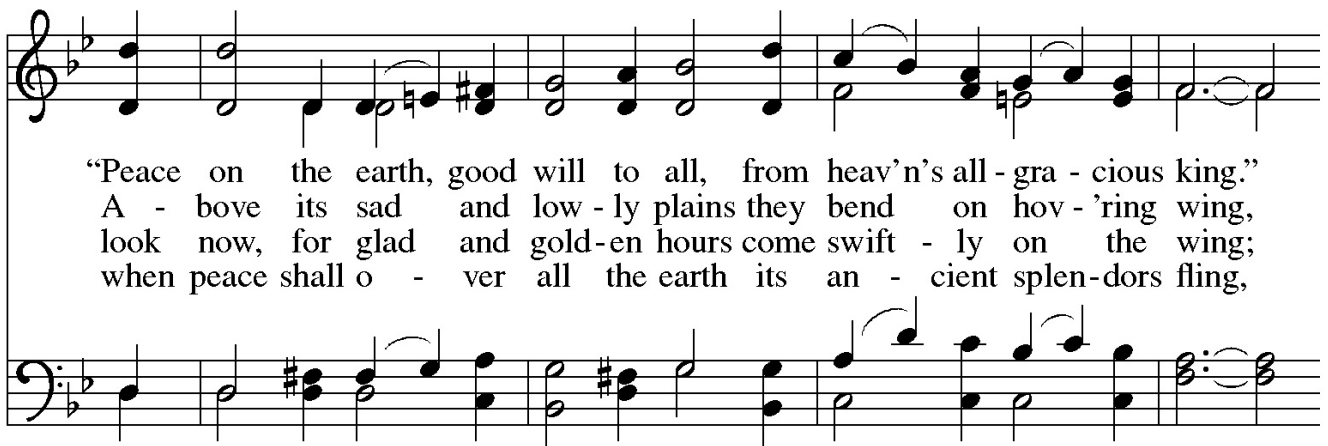
"It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" (ELW 282)



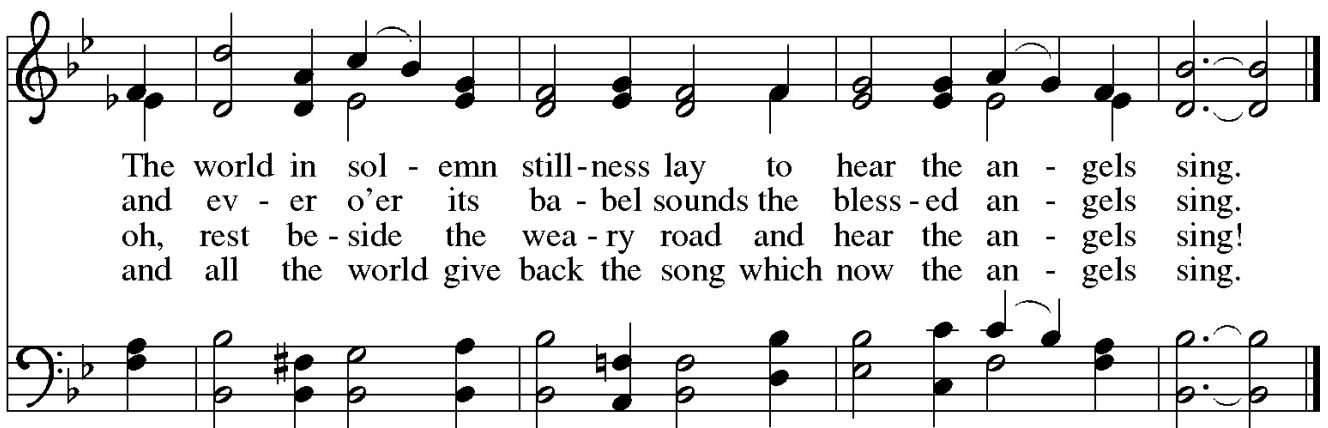
1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,  
 2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,  
 3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,  
 4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
 and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.  
 who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:  
 when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king."  
 A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,  
 look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;  
 when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.  
 and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.  
 oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!  
 and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

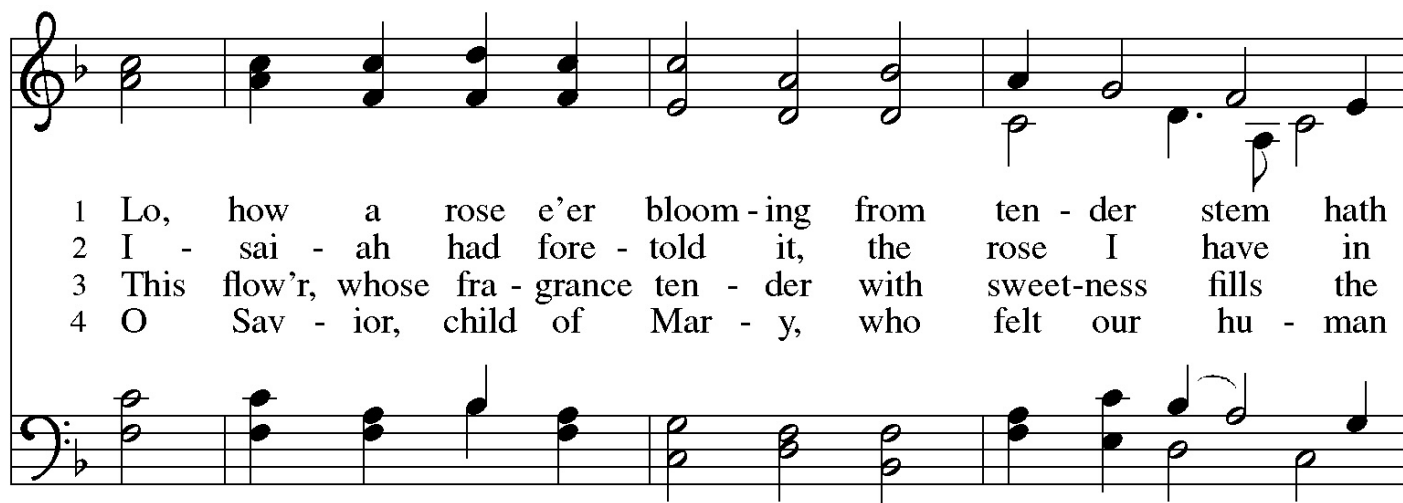


SOLO

"God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen"  
traditional English carol  
arr. Luther Henderson  
Bill Fahle, trombone

CAROL

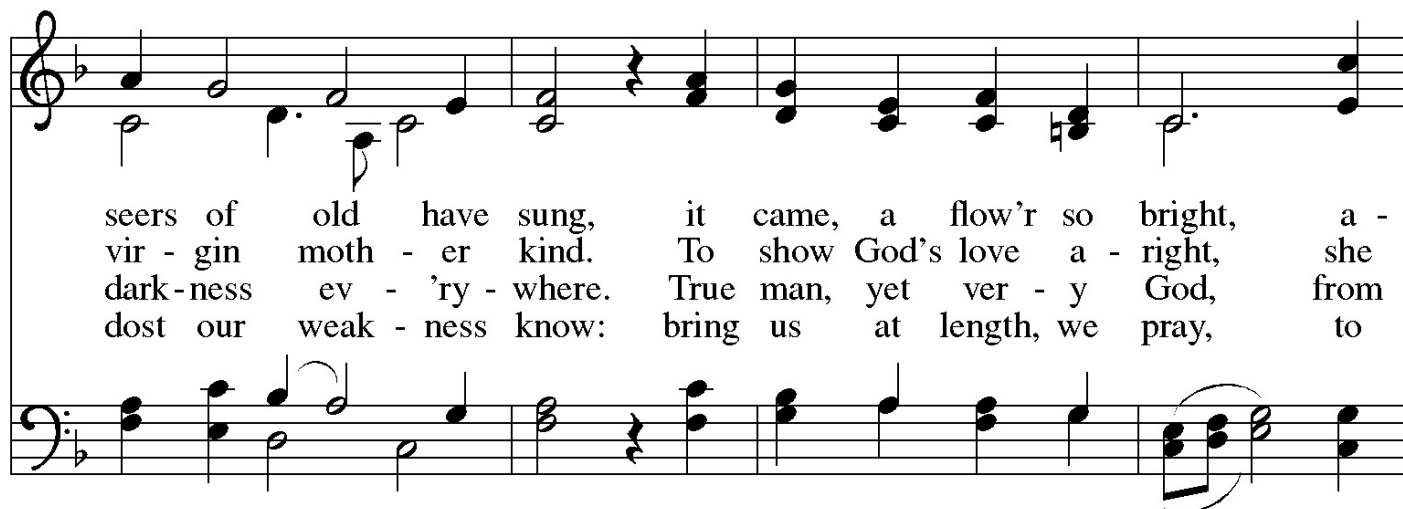
"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" (ELW 272)



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom - ing from ten - der stem hath  
2 I - sai - ah had fore - told it, the rose I have in  
3 This flow'r, whose fra - grance ten - der with sweet-ness fills the  
4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing as  
mind; with Mar - y we be - hold it, the  
air, dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor the  
woe; O Sav - ior, king of glo - ry, who



seers of old have sung, it came, a flow'r so bright, a -  
vir - gin moth - er kind. To show God's love a - right, she  
dark-ness ev - 'ry - where. True man, yet ver - y God, from  
dost our weak - ness know: bring us at length, we pray, to

mid the cold of win - ter, when half - spent was the night.  
 bore to us a Sav - ior, when half - spent was the night.  
 sin and death he saves us and light - ens ev - 'ry load.  
 the bright courts of heav - en and in - to end - less day.

# CAROL

"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" (ELW 270)

1 Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king;  
 2 Christ, by high - est heav'n a - dored, Christ, the ev - er - last - ing Lord,  
 3 Hail the heav'n - born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righ-teous-ness!

peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, God and sin - ners rec - on - ciled."  
 late in time be - hold him come, off - spring of a vir - gin's womb.  
 Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with heal - ing in his wings.

Joy - ful, all you na - tions, rise; join the tri - umph of the skies;  
 Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail, in - car - nate de - i - ty!  
 Mild he lays his glo - ry by, born that we no more may die,

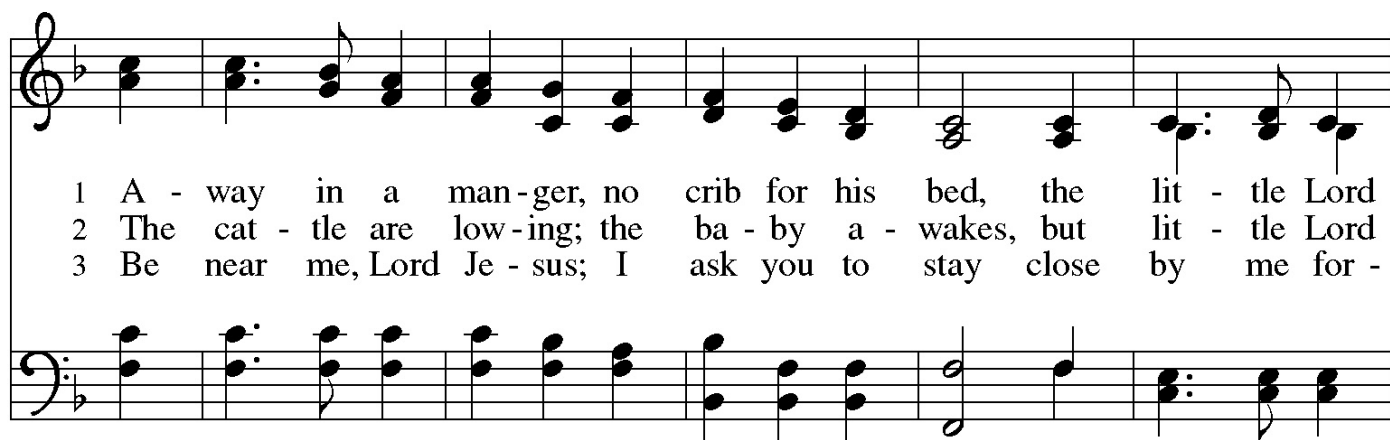
with an - gel - ic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is born in Beth - le - hem!"  
 Pleased as man with us to dwell, Je - sus, our Em - man - u - el!  
 born to raise each child of earth, born to give us sec - ond birth.

*Refrain*

Hark! The her - ald an - gels sing, "Glo - ry to the new-born king!"

# CAROL

"Away in a Manger" (ELW 277)



1 A - way in a man-ger, no crib for his bed, the lit - tle Lord  
 2 The cat - tle are low-ing; the ba - by a - wakes, but lit - tle Lord  
 3 Be near me, Lord Je - sus; I ask you to stay close by me for -



Je - sus laid down his sweet head; the stars in the bright sky looked  
 Je - sus, no cry - ing he makes. I love you, Lord Je - sus; look  
 ev - er and love me, I pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in



down where he lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus a - sleep on the hay.  
 down from the sky and stay by my cra - dle till morn-ing is nigh.  
 your ten - der care and fit us for heav-en, to live with you there.

# SOLO

"Gabriel's Oboe"  
 by Ennio Morricone  
*Paula Bennett, oboe*

# CAROL

"Go Tell It on the Mountain" (ELW 290)

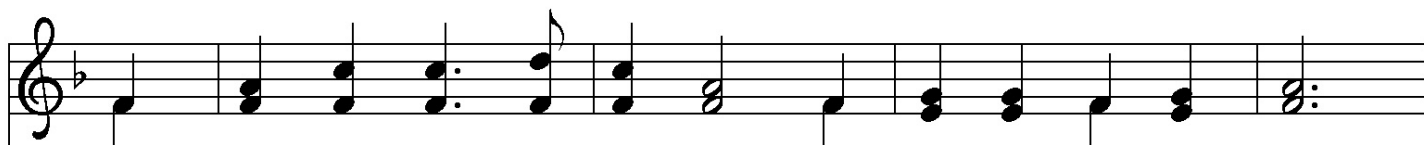
*Refrain*



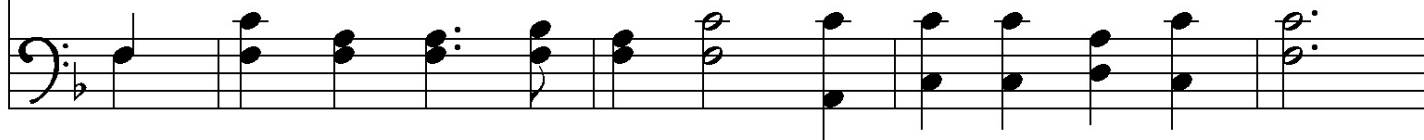
Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,  
2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth  
3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;



*Refrain*



be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.  
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.  
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.



(Verse 1 - Praise Team)  
Good news of great joy  
For every woman every man,  
This will be a sign to you:  
A baby born in Bethlehem,  
Come and worship, do not be afraid.

(Verse 2 - All)  
A company of angels,  
Glory in the highest  
And on the earth a peace among  
Those on whom His favor rests.  
Come and worship, do not be afraid.

(Refrain - All)  
My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord,  
My soul magnifies the Lord;  
He has done great things for me,  
Great things for me.

(Verse 3 - All)  
Unto you a child is born,  
Unto us a Son is given.  
Let every heart prepare His throne,  
Let every nation under Heaven  
Come and worship, do not be afraid.

(Refrain - All)  
My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord,  
My soul magnifies the Lord;  
He has done great things for me,  
Great things for me.

My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord,  
My soul magnifies the Lord;  
He has done great things for me,  
Great things for me.

(Praise Team)

Of His government there will be no end,  
He'll establish it with His righteousness,  
And He shall reign on David's throne,  
And His name shall be from this day on  
Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father  
Wonderful Counselor.  
And His name shall be Everlasting Father!

(Praise Team/**Congregation**)

My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord.  
**My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord.**

He has done great things for us,  
He has done great things for us.  
**He has done great things for us,**  
**He has done great things for us.**

My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord.  
**My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord.**  
**My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord.**

(Refrain - All)

**My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord,**  
**My soul magnifies the Lord;**  
**He has done great things for me,**  
**Great things for me.**

**My soul, my soul magnifies the Lord,**  
**My soul magnifies the Lord;**  
**He has done great things for me,**  
**Great things for me.**

He has done great things!  
He has done great things!

**SOLO**

"Gesù Bambino"  
by Pietro Yon; arr. Luther Henderson  
*Bill Fahle, trombone*

## SOLO

"O Holy Night"  
by Adolph Adams  
*Ed Thieman, tenor*

O Holy Night! The stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining  
Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary soul rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!  
Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night divine; O night divine!

Truly he taught us to love one another,  
His law is love and his gospel is peace.  
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,  
And in his name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise his holy name.  
Christ is the Lord! Oh, praise his name forever!  
His power and glory evermore proclaim!  
His power and glory evermore proclaim



## GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.*

## WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Pastor Mallory Morris*

### **\*\* CALL TO WORSHIP**

The prophets foretold his coming:  
A child will bring light to the darkness,  
comfort to a burdened nation,  
and peace that will endure.

**O come, let us adore him!**



The angels announced his birth:  
Good news of great joy!  
Glory to God in the highest!  
Peace to God's people on earth!  
**O come, let us adore him!**

Kings bowed before him:  
Rulers traveling far from their kingdoms,  
Guided by the light of Truth and a star in the east;  
The wise three are the first to worship Christ.  
**O come, let us adore him!**

His light is eternal:  
In our lives, in our hope -  
In our relationships, in our challenges -  
Within our very selves - Jesus Christ is born!  
**O come, let us adore him!**

**\*\* GATHERING SONG**

"O Come, All Ye Faithful" (ELW 283, verses 1-3)

(Verse 1)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
Come and behold him, born the King of angels:  
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

(Verse 2)

The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,  
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;  
Son of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

(Verse 3)

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God in the highest:  
O come, let us adore him; O come, let us adore him;  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

**\*\* GREETING**

The grace of the Christ-child, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. And also with you.

**\*\* THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

A reading from Revelation:

"Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1-2)

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life,  
you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.  
Glory to you for oceans and lakes, for rivers and streams.

Honor to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow.  
Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you.  
You are the fountain of resurrection.  
Praise to you for your saving waters:  
Noah and the animals survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well.  
The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from your gushing rock.  
Naaman washes his leprosy away,  
and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.  
Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word  
that saves us in this sacrament.  
Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation.  
Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears.  
Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us.  
Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Savior,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

**\*\* SONG OF PRAISE**

"Angels We Have Heard on High (Deo)" (ELW 289)

(Intro - Praise Team)  
Deo, oh. Deo, oh.

**(Verse 1 - All)**

**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains;  
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

**(Refrain - All)**

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**(Verse 2 - All)**

**Come to Bethlehem and see him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King.**

**(Refrain - All)**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**(Bridge - Praise Team / All)**

**We will raise our voices, Deo, oh;  
Join the angels' song on high, Deo, oh;  
We will hold your beautiful light,  
Shining glory through the night, Deo, oh.**

**(Verse 3 - All)**

**Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains;  
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.**

**(Refrain - All)**

**Gloria, in excelsis Deo.  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**(Bridge - Praise Team / All)**

**We will raise our voices, Deo, oh;  
Join the angels' song on high, Deo, oh;  
We will hold your beautiful light,  
Shining glory through the night, Deo, oh.**

**\*\* PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light.  
Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last  
day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who  
lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture, reading, preaching and song.*

### FIRST READING

Isaiah 9:2-7

*This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah's king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God's passion for the people: The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!*

A reading from Isaiah.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### PSALM

Psalms 96

*Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11)*

Sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.

**Sing to the Lord, bless the name of the Lord;  
proclaim God's salvation from day to day.**

Declare God's glory among the nations  
and God's wonders among all peoples.

**For great is the Lord and greatly to be praised,  
more to be feared than all gods.**

As for all the gods of the nations, they are but idols;  
but you, O Lord, have made the heavens.

**Majesty and magnificence are in your presence;**

**power and splendor are in your sanctuary.**

Ascribe to the Lord, you families of the peoples,  
ascribe to the Lord honor and power.

**Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the holy name;  
bring offerings and enter the courts of the Lord.**

Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;  
tremble before the Lord, all the earth.

**Tell it out among the nations: "The Lord is king!**

**The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peoples with equity."**

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;  
let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O Lord,  
for you come to judge the earth.**

You will judge the world with righteousness  
and the peoples with your truth.

## **SECOND READING**

Titus 2:11-14

*The appearance of God's grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior's final appearance.*

A reading from Titus.

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **\*\* GOSPEL READING**

Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]

*God's greatest gift comes as a baby in a manger. Angels announce the "good news of great joy" and proclaim God's blessing of peace.*

The holy gospel according to Luke..

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he

was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region, there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**YOUTH MESSAGE**

*Pastor Mallory Morris*

**MESSAGE**

*Pastor Mallory Morris*

## ANTHEM

"Like a Rose in Winter"  
by Handt Hanson and Paul Murakami  
arr. Dan Goeller  
*Chancel Choir*

Like a rose in winter, red on fallen snow;  
Such a flower is blooming where no other would grow.  
When in the chill of winter time, while all the world was sleeping,  
Love came as a flower, born in Jesus today.

Like a rose in winter springs new life from old,  
Bright and bursting color in a world dark and cold.  
Crimson the stains that mark the path, crown formed by thorns is bleeding,  
Love came as a flower, born in Jesus today.

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.

Like a rose in winter in a manger stall,  
Christ was born of Mary, a flower so tender and small.  
And now his fragrance fills the air; sweetly, we join in signing:  
Love came as a flower, born in Jesus today.

## **\*\* NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**  
**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;**

he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## GATHERING OF THE GIFTS

### OFFERTORY

“Mary, Did You Know?”  
by Mark Lowry and Buddy Greene  
*Lisa Donovan, mezzo-soprano*  
*Mark Shoemaker, baritone*

Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?  
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?  
This child that you delivered will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy would calm a storm with his hand?  
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod,  
And when you kissed your little baby, you’ve kissed the face of God?

The blind will see, the deaf will hear,  
The dead will live again,  
The lame will leap, the dumb will speak  
The praises of the Lamb.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?  
Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?  
Did you know that your baby boy was heaven’s perfect Lamb,



And the sleeping child you're holding is the great I AM?

**\*\* OFFERING PRAYER**

*Assisting Minister*

God of glory, great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world, that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace, through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**MEAL**

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**\*\* GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Lift up your heads; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your voices; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your hearts; **we lift them up to God.**

**\*\* WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

Holy and faithful God, we have come through Advent filled with hope and fear; with peace and worry; with joy and sorrow; with love and loss. Like the saints before, we have wondered and waited for your coming. We have looked and longed for all you've promised. Now we come to this table, just as we are, and we see that our journey leads us to your promised answer: a place of rest for our souls, a meal where we are filled, and a God who is, indeed, with us.

On the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it; gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Then Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Bless this bread and wine, O God, and bless us as we eat and drink. As you abide with us, transform us to see your Son alive and at work in our midst.

**\*\* LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**\*\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

God is now in flesh appearing.

Come to the feast of joy!

## COMMUNION – *Receiving the Lord's tangible presence.*

The body of Christ given for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

*Each person may respond: Amen.*

**Communion Statement** ~ If you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Redeemer and would like to receive Holy Communion, then come forward to receive the elements. If you would just like to come forward and receive a blessing, then you may do that also.

NOTE: We invite everyone to come forward for Holy Communion. If you have a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request when receiving Communion. Also, if you prefer not to receive wine at Communion, apple juice is available upon request. For those choosing to remain in the pews, there are communion all-in-one cups containing grape juice available in the Narthex.

## REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

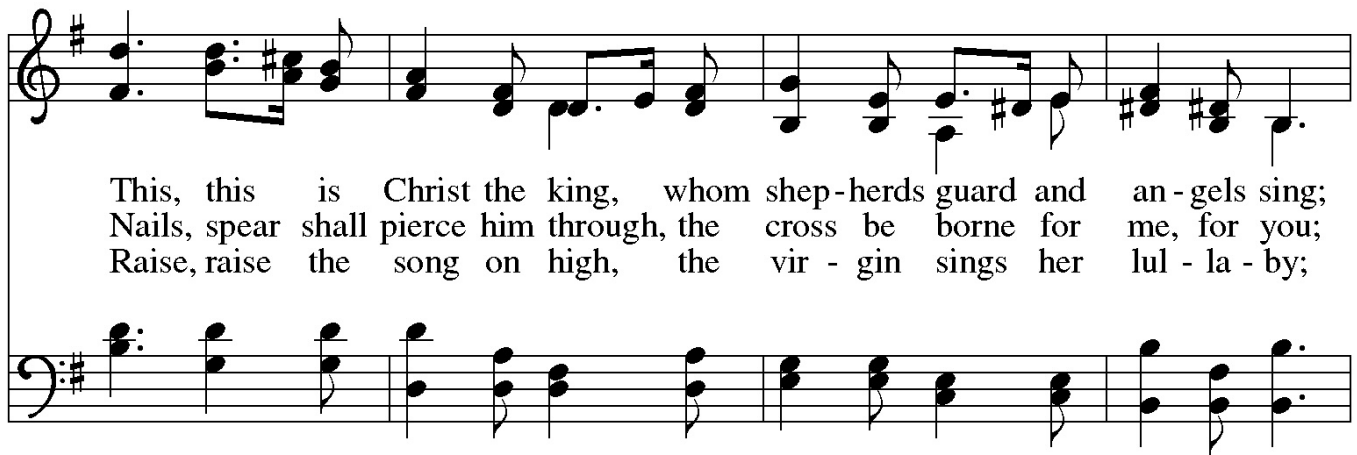
As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ and ponder the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts, and then to work in us and through us each and every day.

## \*\* COMMUNION HYMN

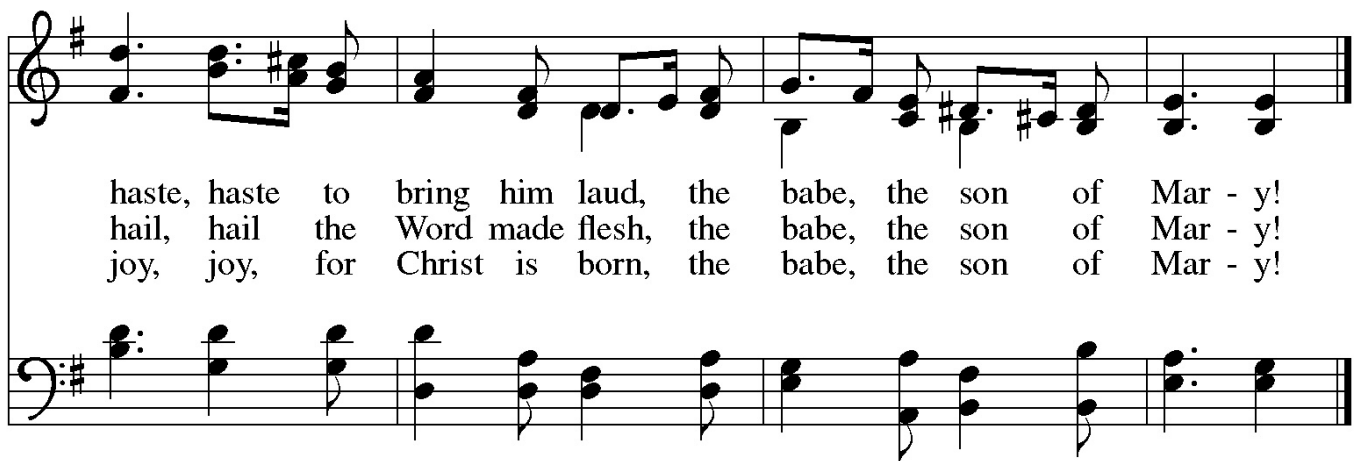
“What Child Is This” (ELW 296)

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mar-y's lap is sleep-ing?  
2 Why lies he in such mean es - tate where ox and ass are feed - ing?  
3 So bring him in - cense, gold, and myrrh; come, peas-ant, king, to own him.

Whom an - gels greet with an-thems sweet while shep-herds watch are keep - ing?  
Good Chris-tian, fear; for sin-ners here the si - lent Word is plead - ing.  
The King of kings sal - va - tion brings; let lov - ing hearts en-throne him.



This, this is Christ the king, whom shep-herds guard and an-gels sing;  
 Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;  
 Raise, raise the song on high, the vir-gin sings her lul-la-by;



haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mar-y!  
 hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mar-y!  
 joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mar-y!

## COMMUNION MEDITATION

"Hallowed Manger Ground"

(Verse 1 - Praise Team)

What hope we hold this starlit night:  
 A King is born in Bethlehem.  
 Our journey long, we seek the light  
 That leads to the hallowed manger ground.

(Verse 2 - Praise Team)

What fear we felt in the silent age,  
 Four-hundred years can he be found?  
 But broken by a baby's cry,  
 Rejoice in the hallowed manger ground.

(Refrain - All)

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
 God incarnate, here to dwell.  
 Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
 Praise his name, Emmanuel.**

(Verse 3 - Praise Team)

The Son of God, here, born to bleed;  
A crown of thorns would pierce his brow.  
And we beheld this offering,  
Exalted now, the King of kings,  
Praise God for the hallowed manger ground.

(Refrain - All)

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
God incarnate, here to dwell.  
Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
Praise his name, Emmanuel.  
Praise his name, Emmanuel.

**\*\* TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and always keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

**\*\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*Assisting Minister*

Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and ponder in our heart the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ born in us. **Amen.**

## CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

**\*\* CELEBRATION OF LIGHT**

God of Mystery and Wonder, this holy night is radiant with the brilliance of the Star of Bethlehem, Jesus, our Light of the World! **The God who said "Out of the darkness the light shall shine!" is the same God who makes the light shine in our hearts through the face of the newborn babe Emmanuel.**

The light shines in the midst of the darkness and we remember that there is no amount of darkness which can extinguish the light of even one small candle. **You O God, created the light that pierces this most holy and silent of nights. Let us go now to be your Light in the world, holding the flame of your presence in our hearts.**

With joy and thanksgiving we have gathered as your people. We have again heard the timeless story of Christmas. In the excitement and awe of this holy night, center our hearts that your love may be born in us anew. **Sing O angels, in the stillness of our hearts. Shine, O Light, in the darkness of our world. Amen.**

## The Sharing of the Light

*For safety: Keep the lighted candle upright at all times. Tip the unlighted candle toward the flame to receive the light.*

### \*\* GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION

John 1:1-14

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

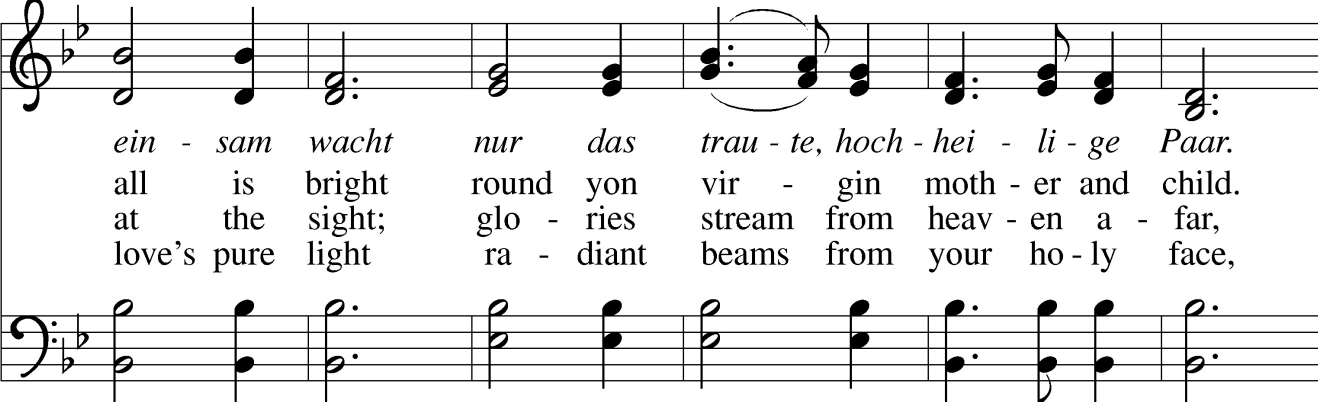
The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

\*\* HYMN OF LIGHT


"Silent Night, Holy Night" (ELW 281)



Stil - le Nacht, hei - li - ge Nacht! Al - les schläft,  
 1 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is calm,  
 2 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Shep - herds quake  
 3 Si - lent night, ho - ly night! Son of God,



ein - sam wacht nur das trau - te, hoch - hei - li - ge Paar.  
 all is bright round yon vir - gin moth - er and child.  
 at the sight; glo - ries stream from heav - en a - far,  
 love's pure light ra - diant beams from your ho - ly face,



Hol - der Kna - be im lok - ki - gen Haar, schlaf in himm - li - scher  
 Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and mild, sleep in heav - en - ly  
 heav'n - ly hosts . . . sing, al - le - lu - ia! Christ, the Sav - ior, is  
 with the dawn of re - deem - ing grace, Je - sus, Lord, at your



Ruh, schlaf in himm - li - scher Ruh.  
 peace, sleep in heav - en - ly peace.  
 born! Christ, the Sav - ior, is born!  
 birth, Je - sus, Lord, at your birth.

# SENDING

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

## \*\* BLESSING

The triune God,  
glorious Mystery,  
holy Incarnate One,  
abiding Comforter,  
✠ bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.  
Amen.

## \*\* SENDING SONG

"Joy to the World" (ELW 267)



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-  
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav-ior reigns! Let all their  
3 No more let sin and sor-row grow nor thorns in-  
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev-'ry heart pre-pare him  
songs em-ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless-ings  
na-tions prove the glo-ries of his righ-teous -

room and heav'n and na-ture sing, and heav'n and na-ture  
plains re-peat the sound-ing joy, re-peat the sound-ing  
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
ness and won-ders of his love, and won-ders of his

and heav'n and na-ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

## \*\* DISMISSAL

*Assisting Minister*

Glory to God in the highest!

**And peace to God's people on earth!**

Go in joy. Embody God's redeeming grace.

**Created, saved and gifted by God, we seek serve and share Jesus Christ.**

**Hallelujah, thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE

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## **“W + 2” = WORSHIP PLUS TWO**

**MAKE A COMMITMENT NOT ONLY TO WORSHIP EACH WEEK,  
BUT ALSO TRY TO FIND A WAY TO SERVE IN THE CONGREGATION  
AND SEEK OUT A WAY TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.**

**YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD**

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# UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS

## **Stephen, Deacon and Martyr**

Friday, December 26, 2025

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

## **John, Apostle and Evangelist**

Saturday, December 27, 2025

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

## **The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**

Sunday, December 28, 2025

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

## **Name of Jesus**

Thursday, January 1, 2026

By Jewish law, every baby boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day of life, so on the eighth day of Christmas the church celebrates this event in Jesus' life. The keeping of the covenant as well as Jesus' name are signs of God's salvation given to us through him.

## **Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe, renewer of the church, died 1872**

Friday, January 2, 2026

Loehe was a pastor in nineteenth-century Germany. Loehe's chief concern was that a congregation find its life in the holy communion, and from that source evangelism and social ministries would flow. He sent pastors to North America, Australia, New Guinea, Brazil, and Ukraine.